



Program Overview:

The VA Quality Scholars Fellowship (VAQS) is a interprofessional fellowship program designed for physicians, nurses, and other clinicians. The VAQS program was established in 1999 by the Veterans Health Administration in collaboration with Dartmouth faculty and researchers and is currently offered at 12 VA Medical Centers nationally. The fellowship is a 2-year residential program which links individualized training at each site with cross-site learning experiences convened by a national coordinating Center located at the Houston (TX) VAMC.

The Mission of our Charleston VAQS Fellowship is to recruit and train future clinical leaders, researchers, and innovators specially equipped to improve access to healthcare and to promote equity in health services and outcomes for all Veterans. Our curriculum supplements the VAQS core curriculum with didactic and experiential learning opportunities

in the areas of population health, social determinants of health, and vulnerable Veteran populations, including female Veterans, racial/ethnic minority populations, and rural Veterans. Fellows are given individualized learning opportunities through Master's-level training in public health, clinical research methods, or clinical informatics based on learner-specified goals. We offer up to 3 positions per year for fellows to work with senior scholars in medicine, nursing, pharmacy and clinical psychology.

VAQS Fellowship Objectives:

Graduating Charleston VAQS Fellows will be able to:

- 🎯 Design and lead interprofessional quality improvement efforts
- 🎯 Teach health care improvement and quality to other health professionals
- 🎯 Design and conduct research and quality improvement projects and publish results in peer-reviewed medical journals
- 🎯 Devise innovative methods for quality improvement and patient safety

Who Can Apply:

Nurses engaged in a DNP or PhD program and post-doctoral nurses are welcome to apply. Physician applicants should have completed an ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship training program, should be board-eligible or board-certified, and should have an active, unrestricted U.S. medical license. Post-doctoral pharmacists and residency-trained PharmD's and/or Clinical Psychologists are also welcome to apply. Other licensed clinicians may apply as well.

How to Apply:

Interested parties should contact Dr. Charlene Pope at Charlene.Pope@va.gov or 843-789-6577.

VA Quality Scholars Website:

www.vaqs.org
COIN



VA

Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center



Training Sites and Affiliated Programs:

Ralph H. Johnson VAMC. The RHJVAMC is a leading primary, secondary, and tertiary care facility located in Charleston, SC. The 117-bed medical center provides acute medical, surgical, and psychiatric inpatients care, as well as outpatient primary and mental health care to Low-country Veterans. RHJVAMC also has six community-based outpatient clinics providing primary, mental health, and some specialty care in clinics located in Myrtle Beach, North Charleston, Beaufort, Goose Creek, and in Georgia in Hinesville and Savannah.

The Medical University of South Carolina. MUSC is dedicated to the pursuit of changing what's possible in health care. MUSC Health includes a 713-bed quaternary care facility comprised of University Hospital; Ashley River Tower, a cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, and cancer specialty hospital; the Institute of Psychiatry; the Storm Eye Institute; and the Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital) on the downtown Charleston campus, in addition to over 100 outreach locations throughout South Carolina. U.S. News & World Report ranked MUSC Health the top hospital in South Carolina for 2017-2018 and among the best in the country in multiple specialty areas. MUSC Health

also boasts Magnate Nursing certification. From a research perspective, MUSC is a top 40 Academic Medical Center with an NIH-funded Clinical and Translational Research Center and an NCI-certified Cancer Center. MUSC College of Graduate Studies sponsors a Master's of Science in Clinical Research, and the Department of Public Health Sciences sponsors graduate degrees in Public Health and Medical Informatics.

HSR&D Center of Innovation (COIN). The Charleston Health Equity and Rural Outreach Innovation Center (HEROIC) is home to over 20 health services researchers with annual Center funding of ~\$575,000 in addition over ~\$2 million in HSR&D and QUERI funding and over ~\$4 million in non-VA federal funding. HEROIC's mission is to advance implementation of evidence-based interventions designed to improve access and and promote equity in outcomes in targeted vulnerable populations.

Program Leadership

Charlene Pope, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN

Senior Nursing Scholar
Chief Nurse for Research at the RHJVAMC
Investigator, Charleston HSR&D Health Equity and Rural Outreach Innovation Center (HEROIC)
Affiliate Associate Professor, The Medical University of South Carolina
Charlene.Pope@va.gov

R. Neal Axon, MD, MSCR

Senior Physician Scholar
Director, Charleston HEROIC
Professor, MUSC
Robert.Axon@va.gov

David Taber, PharmD, MS, BCPS

Senior Pharmacy Scholar
Director, Transplant Pharmacy at RHJVAMC
Investigator, HEROIC
Associate Professor, MUSC
David.Taber2@va.gov

Elizabeth Santa Ana, PhD

Senior Psychology Scholar
Director, Charleston MIRECC Fellowship Program
Director, VISN7 Homelessness Training Program
Investigator, HEROIC
Associate Professor, MUSC
Elizabeth.SantaAna2@va.gov

Karen Slawson, MS

Administrative Officer
Karen.Slawson@va.gov



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

109 Bee Street | Charleston, SC 29401

1-888-878-6884 | www.charleston.va.gov